



SELECT BOARD MEETING
Town Hall
Minutes of Monday, January 8, 2024
7:00 PM

Board Members participating were Select Board Chair Marshall Hook, Select Board Vice-Chair and Clerk Rafael McDonald and Select Board Members Boyd Jackson, Lynne Bermudez and Cameron Brown. Of the Select Board's staff Town Administrator Kevin Harutunian and Samantha Morin were present. National Grid Representative Sibhita Mahabier-Sheehy, Sustainable Advisory Committee members Jenn Forester and Tom Warren with Zillie Bhujju, Topsfield Cultural Council Chair Kathleen Hunt and nominee Isabella Cotton, along with resident Phil Knowles were present to speak to agenda items.

CALL TO ORDER

Select Board Chair Hook called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. The Board stood for the Pledge of Allegiance and then observed a moment of silence.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Vice-Chair and Clerk McDonald made the following announcements:

Announcement of Recordings:

"The meeting is being recorded by the Recording Clerk for the purpose of taking minutes; is there anyone else present who wishes to record the meeting?" There was no response.

Attendance:

"To attendees of the meeting, a sign-in sheet is being circulated; The Board asks that you please sign in to indicate your attendance at today's meeting."

SB Videos on Demand (VOD):

"The Select Board meetings can be viewed by going into the Cable Videos icon on the homepage of the Town's website."

Select Board Meetings:

"The next Select Board Work Session will be on Wednesday, January 10th at 6:00PM. On Monday, January the 22nd, the Board will hold a meeting at 7:00PM. Please check the meeting postings on the Town Website for information to either join via zoom or for the location of that particular meeting/work session."

CITIZEN QUESTIONS & COMMENTS

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

NEW BUSINESS

PUBLIC HEARING: NATIONAL GRID

Chair Hook read the following Legal Notice:

Notice is hereby given that the Topsfield Select Board will hold a public hearing during a Board Meeting on Monday, January 8, 2024 @7:00PM located in Town Hall, Topsfield, MA for a petition by Massachusetts Electric Company d/b/a National Grid to locate and install wires and fixtures including necessary sustaining and protecting fixtures along and across the following public way:

Petition Plan # 30880428 – National Grid to install 1 SO Pole on Washington Street beginning at a point approximately 135 feet east of the centerline of the intersection of Kinsman Lane and Washington Street and continuing approximately 25 feet in a south direction. National Grid to install a Stub Pole #620-89 with sidewalk guy wire on Washington Street.

Also, National Grid and Verizon New England is seeking permission to lay and maintain underground laterals, cables and wires in the above mentioned or intersecting public ways for the purpose of making connections with such poles and buildings as each of said petitioners may desire for distributing purposes.

Marshall P. Hook,
Select Board, Chair

Chair Hook opened the Public Hearing.

Representative from National Grid, Sibhita Mahabier-Sheehy explained the request. National Grid is removing a tree guide and installing a stub pole. The tree it is attached to is dead and will be removed, so a pole is needed. There is no underground wiring that will need to be done. It was asked for Superintendent Wildes to take a look at the site as it is on Town property and make the motion contingent upon his approval. The only disruption to traffic is for the installation of the stub pole.

Board Member Bermudez motioned to close the public hearing. Board Member Brown seconded the motion and it passed with a vote of 5-0

Board Member Brown motioned to approve the request from National Grid to install and perform utility work in the vicinity of 98 Washington Street, Topsfield, contingent upon approval from Superintendent Wildes. Vice Chair McDonald seconded the motion and the motion carried 5-0.

SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE: UPDATE FROM CHAIR

Chair Jenn Forester introduced members of the Sustainability Advisory Committee (SAC) present to the Select Board. The SAC's charter was reiterated, as well as the 5 strategic initiatives that correspond with the charter. Chair Forester provided an overview of completed projects for the Town and the schools as well as the ways to promote renewable energy sources. The sustainability practices that can be used to save the Town money were provided. The SAC actions overlap with the Master Plan and the Committee will continue to align initiatives with the needs of the community.

The Select Board thanked the SAC for all the work completed. For 2024, the priority is the trash contract, which overlaps with toters, community composting, and increasing recycling.

It was noted that being the first certified sustainability leader of New England could potentially allow for more grant funding and opportunities. Renewable energy currently has many funding opportunities that may not be available in future years. The Board noted it would like to see what is entailed in becoming such a leader (activities, costs, timeframes) to determine if it should be one of the town's sustainability priorities.

TOPSFIELD CULTURAL COUNCIL: NEW APPOINTMENT

The Chair of the Topsfield Cultural Council (TCC), Kathleen Hunt, introduced Isabella Cotton as a student appointment to the TCC. Ms. Cotton is a great fit for the TCC in terms of personality and will allow for a new perspective. Isabella Cotton is an art student at Masconomet Regional High School.

The Select Board will be voting on the appointment in their January 22, 2024 meeting.

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT

The Select Board discussed ways to ensure residents were aware the Town Warrant was open. There will be postings on social media and residents can call Town Hall for questions.

Select Board Member Bermudez motioned to open the Town Warrant for the 2024 Annual Town Meeting to be held on Tuesday, May 7, 2024 after the adjournment of this evening's meeting and to close the Town Warrant on Monday, February 5, 2024 at 12:00PM. Select Board Member Brown seconded the motion and it passed with a vote of 5-0.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Select Board Member Jackson has no updates.

Select Board Member Brown went on a ride along with Sgt Frost and learned more about Topsfield Police.

Select Board Member Bermudez was asked by a resident to add an animal waste collection box on the Rail Trail. There will be more discussion at a later date.

Vice-Chair and Clerk McDonald commended the police 5k held on New Year's Eve day. He reminded listeners that property taxes have increased due to both the proposition 2 ½ increase and the school overrides approved at the 2023 Town Meeting and subsequent town election.

Chair Hook reminded listeners of the upcoming Select Board listening session to be held on Jan 20th in concert with the Masconomet School Committee.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

TA Harutunian

- Orchard Street Light Display
- Capital V4.1 was released
- Budget V1 released on Friday
- Interim Town Accountant
- Thanked Public Safety and DPW for snow removal and safety for the weekend

CORRESPONDENCE

Chair Hook informed listeners that correspondence is available on BoardDocs. Multiple thank you letters for the Fire Department. Massachusetts received the first year's allocation of additional Chapter 90 Funds.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 8:14 PM, Chair Hook made a motion by a roll call vote for the Board to enter into closed Executive Session in accordance with M.G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(3) to discuss strategy with respect to potential litigation involving the property located at 207 Boston Street, Topsfield if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the Board and the Chair so declares. Votes may occur during the executive session. The Board will not return to regular open session after the Executive Session.

- 207 Boston Street

Select Board Member Brown seconded the motion and the motion carried with a roll call vote as follows:

Chair Hook	Yes
Vice Chair & Clerk McDonald	Yes
Select Board Member Brown	Yes
Select Board Member Bermudez	Yes
Select Board Member Jackson	Yes

Respectfully submitted,
Samantha Morin, Executive Assistant & Recording Secretary

DOCUMENTS

1. Agenda
2. Legal Notice – 98 Washington Street
3. 98 Washington St
4. 2024 SAC Strategic Plan
5. 1-8-24 SB Meeting Presentation
6. TCC – I Cotton
7. MassDOT – Fair Share
8. HD NET_AXS
9. Tufts University
10. 123 High St – letter to FD
11. Lawrence Hydroelectric Project

<p>Pursuant to the 'Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18-25, the approval of these minutes by the Board constitutes a certification of the date, time and place of the meeting, the members present and absent, and the actions taken at the meeting. Any other description of statements made by any person, or the summary of the discussion of any matter, is included for the purpose of context only, and no certification, express or implied, is made by the Board as to the completeness</p>
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